

The last word Happy birthday, *Cinéaste*!

by the Editors

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Cinéaste, the radical film magazine, recently celebrated ten years of publication, and that is something worth taking note of. To create and sustain a left cultural institution such as *Cinéaste* is an important contribution to the entire left movement, and the *Cinéaste* staff deserves recognition and thanks for a job well done. With its attractive format, consistently readable reviews, clear arguments, wide-ranging topical interests, and in-depth interviews and articles in every issue, *Cinéaste* makes vital reading for everyone concerned with radical culture and politics.

Cinéaste has provided information and analysis unavailable elsewhere, and by so doing it has helped build a stronger left film culture in the U.S. Specifically, *Cinéaste* has focused attention on independent left filmmaking, on third world films, and on progressive examples of mainstream film. It has also provided a *political* analysis of those films, raising criticism within a left context and thereby generating and continuing the political dialogue essential to advancing political film work. In the process of expanding the left film discussion, *Cinéaste* has taken on some important and controversial issues such as Palestine, pornography, and the radical potential of commercial narrative forms. Throughout the last decade, the magazine has shown the urgency and liveliness of radical work in filmmaking and film criticism.

Being in the similar position of editing and publishing a radical film magazine, we are more acutely aware than most of how much "invisible" hard work is required and how much determination is necessary to keep *Cinéaste* going and growing. In fact, the existence of *Cinéaste* gave us the confidence to launch JUMP CUT five years ago. Of course there are differences between the two publications, but we see these as reflecting a healthy diversity more than being a matter for antagonistic feuding.

For example, *Cinéaste* has clearly taken a strong stand rejecting new theory such as semiology and dismissing formal innovation in political film — Godard being the most obvious case — while JUMP CUT has assumed a skeptical interest in such new developments. Our criticism of *Cinéaste* with respect to such differences rests less on the specific stand they have taken and more on the neglect to explain the basis for their position. We don't think that matters involving film theory can be dismissed as irrelevant "fine points." On the contrary, in left film work theoretical differences always reflect essential *political* differences, and making the underlying position clear is essential to discussing it politically. In this context, we see *Cinéaste's* recent call for reader responses to its reviews and articles as an important step toward increasing informed discussion of film and politics.

In the past ten years many left projects have come and gone, many with much militant fanfare and posturing. *Cinéaste* has come and stayed, and grown — in frequency, in circulation, and above all in importance to the film community and to the left. *Cinéaste* has never claimed to be more than it is, but its staff has always been serious and dedicated in making it what it is — one of the most significant left cultural projects of the past decade. On the occasion of their tenth birthday we offer the staff — designer Bill Plympton, writer-editors Dan Georgakas, Ruth McCormick, and Lenny Rubenstein, and founder-editor Gary Crowdus — our solidarity and best revolutionary wishes for the next ten years.

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